

# ORM NEWS

Office of Resolution Management  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
[www.va.gov/orm](http://www.va.gov/orm)



**"Honoring and Serving our Nation's Veterans by Promoting  
Discrimination-free Environments"**

**April 2005**

***From the Deputy Assistant Secretary***



## **Employer-of-Choice Award**

The Employer-of-Choice award recognizes Field Offices that deliver outstanding customer service to internal and external customers and make a significant contribution to ORM's organizational mission. "Employer-of-Choice" describes an organization that through its leadership, culture, and best practices attracts and retains high performing employees while excelling in its organizational mission.

To be recognized for this award, Field Offices must excel in three areas. First, internal employees must feel empowered, have opportunities for development and advancement, be recognized and rewarded for their contributions, and feel valued. Second, external customers must be satisfied with our service delivery. Third, and equally as important, is the contribution to our overall mission – in other words, effectiveness in complaint processing (quality, timeliness, and efforts toward promoting the use of early resolution).

A review of each field office's performance in the three categories during fiscal year 2004 revealed one office excelling in the first category (internal satisfaction) and another office excelling in the next category (external customer satisfaction).

No single field office was superior in each of the measures for the third category (complaint processing). Consequently, no office was selected for the 2004 Employer-of Choice Award.

However, I am extremely pleased by the results of the internal and external satisfaction surveys. I commend Western Operations for their outstanding internal satisfaction, and I commend Great Lakes Operations for their outstanding external customer satisfaction.

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To recognize these achievements, I am authorizing two hours of authorized leave to each staff member of these offices. Western Operations and Great Lakes Operations are authorized to send two additional employees to the Federal Dispute Resolution (FDR) and EXCEL conferences this year.

Although there was no winner of the Employer-of-Choice award this year, I encourage each office to continue striving to excel in each category.

In fiscal year 2005, the Employer-of-Choice award will be based on performance in the following areas:

- Internal Customer Satisfaction (33%). Offices will be evaluated based on the results of the annual all-employee survey administered by ORM's Customer Service Division. In order to be considered for the award, a field office must have at least a 50% response rate.
- External Customer Satisfaction (33%). Offices will be evaluated based on the results of the external customer surveys administered by the Customer Service Division. A field office must have at least a 20% response rate.
- Contribution to ORM's Mission (34%). Offices will be evaluated based on:
  - Informal resolution rate
  - Percentage of supplemental investigations requested
  - Remand rate of procedural reviews
  - Production and timeliness standards for each process (counseling, intake, investigations)

Additional performance measures are being developed for this award. They will be shared with you when they are completed.

We must continue to deliver excellent customer service, both internal and externally, while processing complaints in a timely and high-quality manner.

I thank each of you for your continued dedication and support. I look forward to another outstanding year as we strive together to become an "Employer-of-Choice."

*James S. Jones*

## **National Volunteer Week April 17-23, 2005 Message from the Secretary**



Each day we hear of the selfless and heroic actions of our military men and women fighting for and preserving freedom throughout the world. We work tirelessly to insure their smooth transition as they return to home and family.

As we salute these true American heroes and honor their service, this week I salute those who help VA serve America's veterans in medical centers, nursing homes, clinics, national cemeteries and benefits offices nationwide – our VA volunteers.

They, too, are American heroes whose work side-by-side with VA staff enables us to provide quality care and compassionate service to all veterans. VA volunteers inspire us as they serve others. They give life and meaning to America's commitment to those who fight in her defense. They reflect our Nation's true spirit.

This week -- National Volunteer Week – on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the veterans we serve, and the United States of America, I thank VA volunteers for their service, their spirit and their inspiration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "R. James Nicholson". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "R" and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

R. James Nicholson

# FedEx Costs

Barbara Scott, Program Analyst

Here's a friendly reminder to help reduce FedEx mailing costs.



- FedEx should only be used when it is extremely urgent that the material be shipped to arrive at its destination by the next business day.
- “FedEx Overnight” should not be the normal practice for mailing materials, but rather should be limited to time sensitive material requiring a signature at the time of delivery.

Before you send a package via “FedEx Overnight”, ask yourself these questions:

1. Could I send this material by regular mail?
2. Can I send this certified mail and still meet the deadline?
3. Is this a priority that needs to be delivered within a 24-hour timeframe (overnight delivery)?
4. If it is a priority and mission critical, could I use FedEx services and have it delivered by the third business day using *FedEx Express Saver*?

Cost Savings – Listed below is a sample of FedEx costs savings when using 3rd business day delivery compared to overnight delivery (keep in mind that FedEx costs vary per location):

Overnight - \$5.10  
2nd business day - \$4.20  
3rd business day - \$3.93

As you can see there are savings when 3<sup>rd</sup> business day is used compared to “Overnight.” The cost for using “FedEx Overnight” is significant ORM-wide and the savings will be just as significant if we use less expensive methods for package delivery.

Using cost effective mail delivery is both smart and efficient. Remember, FedEx overnight is not the only way to get your package delivered. Taking a role in reducing FedEx costs is something we all can do.

## **Privacy Awareness Training Reminder**

*Tyrone Eddins, FOIA/Privacy Officer*

It is that time of year to replenish our knowledge and awareness of our Privacy Act responsibilities.

Instructions for completing fiscal year 2005 Annual Privacy Act training were sent to all employees by email on March 25, 2005. You should coordinate with your supervisor for time to complete this training. ORM employees are required to complete the training ("General Employee Privacy Awareness 2005" training module) no later than June 1, 2005.

You have the option of completing the training online by using the link <http://vaww.privacyawareness.aac.va.gov/> or you can view the video "Privacy: It's Everyone's Business" (each field office should have a copy of the video).

Employees opting to view the video should see their supervisor for guidance. Supervisors will certify to Learning Resources staff the names and dates of completion for those employees who choose to view the video. Employees using the on-line method to complete training will have their completion automatically tracked.

If there are questions concerning the training, employees should contact Charlene Jones of Learning Resources at 727-319-1243 or Tyrone Eddins, FOIA/Privacy Officer, at 202-501-2828.

## **ORM Reasonable Accommodation Policy**



ORM's "Reasonable Accommodation" policy and procedures were recently sent to all employees. ORM will make reasonable accommodation for the physical or mental impairment of an applicant or employee who is a qualified individual with a disability, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship.

Employees in need of accommodation due to a disability are encouraged to contact your office or program manager. Questions concerning this policy can also be directed to Zakia Batchelor, Human Resources Specialist, at (202) 501- 2756.

# Office Notes



## Government Service Recognition

**Terry Washington**, Program Analyst – 35 years.  
**Annie Fontenet**, Administrative Officer – 35 years  
**Peggy Joyner**, Quality Assurance Officer – 30 years  
**Kevin Thomas**, Computer Specialist – 30 years  
**Stephanie Williams**, Counselor – 20 years  
**Gloria Smith**, Investigator – 15 years  
**Francis Cullen**, Counselor – 15 years  
**Shirley Fulton**, Program Analyst – 10 years

## Central Plains Operations

**HK (Sue) Thorson**, C2 Investigator, was recently elected to serve as the Chairperson of the “Federal Asian Pacific American Council New Mexico Chapter (FAPAC-NM).” Congratulations Sue.

## Mid-South Operations

**Austin B. Lewis**, Regional EEO Officer, was the guest speaker for the Human Resources Management class at Pulaski Technical College in North Little Rock, Arkansas on March 14, 2005. Mr. Lewis was presented a certificate of appreciation from the Dean of Business at the college for speaking to the class.

**David Woodly**, Intake Specialist, was recently called to active duty. During this tour, David will be stationed at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. Please join our staff in wishing him a safe return home.

Mid-South Operations staff presented food and household items to a needy family during the Easter holidays. The family was very appreciative of the support shown by our employees.

## Voluntary Leave Transfer Program

**Sharon E. Hughes**, EEO Specialist in the Washington Field Office, has been approved for the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP). Employees who would like to donate annual leave to Sharon should complete VA Form 0239 and forward it to Linda Hughes (05HR) at the HRC Human Resource Office. You may fax the document to (785) 228-4935 or scan the document and send it to her by email. If you have any questions about VLTP, please contact Ms. Hughes at (785) 350-3780. The minimum amount of annual leave you may donate is four hours and all donations are voluntary.

# Did You Know?

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

### April 17-23, 2005

Individuals who share their time and talents to make a difference in the lives of our community's veterans will be honored during **National Volunteer Week, April 17-23.**

VA facilities throughout the country will host special National Volunteer Week ceremonies during this week.

"Volunteers lead by example. They inspire VA staff and the veterans they serve," said a VA spokesperson. "Most important for us at VA, they honor those veterans who have served us all by serving them in their time of need."

This year's theme, "**Inspire by Example!**" applauds the efforts of volunteers and also encourages others to get involved in helping strengthen their communities.

"It's easy to overlook the importance of volunteers because they rarely sing their own praises; yet they change so many lives," said the spokesperson. "National Volunteer Week is a way of saying 'Thank you!' to the selfless men, women, and young people who embody the American spirit of caring for one another."

The latest study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics on volunteers reported nearly **29 percent** of the population, over 64 million Americans, volunteers their time.

VA volunteers perform a range of important duties, from playing cards and visiting with hospitalized veterans to doing clerical tasks or helping with specialized medical procedures. Their roles depend on their interests, skills and availability.

For rewarding volunteer opportunities, visit the VA Voluntary Service Web site at [www.va.gov/volunteer/](http://www.va.gov/volunteer/) or call your local VA Medical Center or Cemetery Voluntary Service.



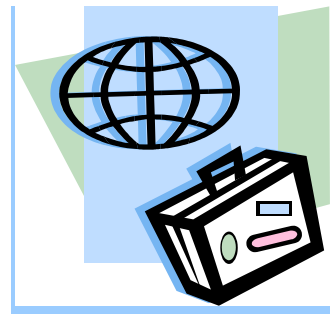


## Thrift Savings Plan Open Season

The next **Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season** will run from Friday, April 15, 2005, through Thursday, June 30, 2005. Do you have an Employee Express PIN (Personal Identification Number)? You'll need this PIN if you want to begin contributing to TSP or change the amount of your contribution using the very convenient online Employee Express website at <http://vawww.eex.va.gov/> or at [www.employeeexpress.gov](http://www.employeeexpress.gov) and click on "Lost or Forgot PIN" to request a new number. Do it now so that you're ready to make changes during the Open Season or in the future. If you have questions, contact your Human Resources Representative.

## Zegato Cancellation Fee

Zegato has announced that it will automatically pay Citibank the \$21 cancellation fee when you cancel your approved online travel plan. You no longer have to do an amended travel plan for the \$21 fee cancellation fee. Contact Barbara Scott at (202) 501-2817 for more information.



## Online State Tax Exemption Forms

**State Tax Exemption Forms** are available online at GSA's Web site [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov). Click on "Travel" under "Services," then go to "Related GSA Topics."

Prior to travel, you are encouraged to review the listing, print a copy of the certificate for your destination, fill out the appropriate sections, sign and present it to the hotel. This will ensure that you are not charged hotel taxes. Contact Barbara Scott at (202) 501-2817 for more information.

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